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Community Health Final
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PLU School of Nursing Objective # 7: Apply the nursing process in the provision of direct and indirect care of individuals, families and communities in a variety of settings and across diverse populations.

(What have I learned? How did I learn it? What am I going to do with it?)

Nurs 430: Nursing Situations With Communities

I learned that Community Health nursing is huge. My eyes have been opened to another branch of nursing that is probably bigger than the “nursing” I knew about before this class. This surprised me because I was already amazed at the diversification of nursing within the acute care setting. Instead of individuals or even families as our clients, in community health, the client is a community or a population or even the whole nation. I learned that an assessment means that I take a walk through the neighborhood and stop in at the community center to see what the environment looks and feels like. Objective and subjective data is gathered from key informants, census records, telephone books, and observations. It is possible to take a community’s pulse, measure their blood pressure and listen to their heart and lungs. In fact, the complete nursing process is very applicable to communities and populations as I discovered through the community assessment project and the Strong Bonds project that my group completed. The nursing process is a framework that uncovers the strengths and weaknesses of the client (whether one person or an entire community), and provides clear direction in forming a diagnosis, developing goals and objectives to intervene in the situation and evaluates the effectiveness of the interventions. By using the nursing process, I was able to diagnose and treat the Fort Lewis community.

I have also learned that Community health nursing is revolutionary. Looking back over the last century, the changes that have had the biggest impact on the health and wellness of Americans have been due largely to the work of community health nurses. Safe and adequate food supplies, clean water and sanitation, control of infectious diseases and population-based prevention programs such as tobacco cessation, blood pressure control, better nutrition, and automobile safety restraints, were all public health instigated. Today, if big change is to take place, our clients must be communities and populations, rather

than individuals. Over the past 50 years, our healthcare system moved away from a focus on population based health promotion and disease prevention (health focus) to treatment of disease in an acute care setting (illness focus). Cost of health care has skyrocketed and fewer Americans are able to get health insurance. As a nation, we are in a healthcare crisis and the only way to solve the problem is to return to an emphasis on social justice—a sharing of the benefits and burdens of healthcare, and our focus must return to primary and secondary levels of health promotion. Restructuring the health insurance industry is not going to improve the average American's health. Public health nurses need to be the leaders of a revolution—the right of every American to primary health care. They are educated and practiced in using a powerful tool--the nursing process, which provides a framework to analyze and produce productive change for the better. No job is too small or too big for the community health nurse using the nursing process.

Finally, I have learned it doesn't matter if I become a community health nurse or not. What matters is the way I approach a client. I need to understand that they are a part of a family, a community and a population and the time I spend with them has an impact on those spheres of his or her life even if I don't ever see them. I must always be teaching disease prevention and health promotion. I must always consider what will be best for my patient five years down the road. I need to ensure that my interactions with them today, have positive impacts on their life, their families, their communities and their populations. Community health nursing is a mindset, not a job title.